TUCSON WIFI ALLIANCE HOTSPOT FAQ
Powered by Simply Bits

What wireless (WiFi) adapters can be used to access the service? – Any wireless card supporting the 802.11b standard.

Does the Hotspot support 802.11g? – Yes, but the enhanced speed does no good because the connections for each user are limited to 512Kb/sec. Additionally, 802.11g in an outdoor environment has to constantly back down to 802.11b speeds in order to be a good neighbor and thus it effectively runs at 802.11b speeds anyway. Your 802.11g laptop or WiFi adapter should work just fine.

How do I get connected? – Your computer must be configured to obtain an IP address automatically. For Windows 95/98/me go to START, SETTINGS CONTROL PANEL, NETWORK and locate the listing that points to your network card (i.e. Cisco PCM352 -> TCP/IP). Double click on that to open its settings. On the IP address tab change the option to "Obtain automatically"; on the gateway tab remove any installed gateways and set to obtain automatically; on the DNS configuration tab set that to obtain automatically. Click OK twice and reboot if asked.

For Windows 2000 and XP click on START, SETTINGS, CONTROL PANEL, NETWORK AND DIALUP CONNECTIONS, LOCAL AREA CONNECTION (for XP users no tin classic mode – ec). Double click on LOCAL AREA CONNECTION and then click on PROPERTIES. In the box that opens your wireless card should be listed (if not close the box and look for something like LOCAL AREA CONNECTION 2). In the middle of the box double click on the listing for INTERNET PROTOCOL and in the box that opens change the options to "Obtain an IP address automatically" and "Obtain DNS automatically". Click Ok twice.

What if I do not get an IP address? - Try going to a command prompt and typng "ipconfig /renew". If that fails try rebooting your computer. XP users should click on START, CONTROL PANEL, NETWORK & INTERNET CONNECTIONS, NETWORK CONNECTIONS, LOCAL AREA CONNECTION and then click on the support tab and click the "Repair" button. Users of XP Service Pack 1 may need to allow unsecure wireless connections. When attempting to connect click on the option for "Allow me to connect to the selected wireless network even though it is not secure".

What is the WEP key? – There is none.

Can I send email? – Yes, no changes to your email client are required.

What operating systems are supported? – You can use Windows 98SE, Windows ME, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Macintosh OS X, and most versions of Linux.

Where can I call for technical support? – Because the service is free, we cannot provide any technical support. Your computer vendor may be able to assist you as well as some of the local user groups.

How do I retrieve e-mail from the my account at my normal ISP? – You can do so normally, assuming your ISP doesn't block access to it's mail servers from outside the ISP network. Most ISP's do not block such access. You should contact your ISP's support department if you have trouble retrieving your email from their service via this Hotspot.

How do I secure my wireless communications while on the Hotspot? – The free service provides no security. If you want to have secure wireless communications, you may contact Simply Bits at 545-0400 for information about paid accounts with security and support. If you have access to a VPN server, you can attempt to communicate through it to provide secure communications. Note that this Hotspot will not support IPSEC VPN's when using AH, but should support other VPN's such as PPTP, SSL, and L2TP, and IPSEC ESP.

I want a Hotspot at my business, who should I contact? – Contact Simply Bits at 545-0400 for complete solutions.

Should I use a firewall on my computer? – Absolutely. Contact your computer vendor if you have questions about enabling the firewall on your machine. Note that Windows XP, Mac OS X, and Linux all have built-in firewalls, but you must take precautions to ensure that the firewall is configured and enabled.

Can I use this Hotspot with AOL? – You certainly can. AOL technical support can assist you in accessing AOL through this Hotspot. Their number is 1-800-392-5180.

Can I access my employer's email system and network? – Yes. This Hotspot provides the same unrestricted access to the Internet offered by most ISPs (Internet Service Providers). If you can access company email remotely with a traditional dial-up connection, then you can access it through this Hotspot. Many organizations allow employees to access email and the internal network remotely. Check with your Information Technology department for details.

Troubleshooting Tips

Some settings occasionally need to be changed before a wireless connection to the Web is possible. The following tips can help simplify your connection to a public hotspot.

IP settings

If your notebook is configured for a static IP address, it must be configured at a public hotspot to accept a dynamically assigned IP address. This will be different for Windows XP and Windows 2000. For Windows XP, double-click on "Network Connections," right-click on the icon for the wireless device that is built into your notebook, then select "Properties." (Note: If an IP address is assigned, make a note of the address so you can reset it later.) Select "Internet Protocol (TCP/IP)," then click on "Properties." Ensure you've selected "Obtain an IP address automatically." (See the following figure.)
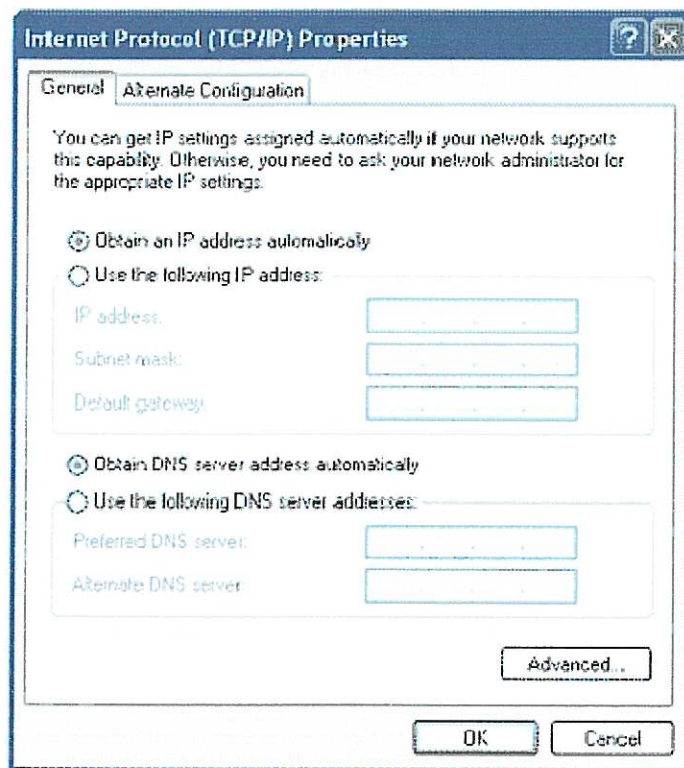
Browser homepage

Your browser homepage may be configured to an internal Intranet site. At public hotspots, you must browse to an external site in order to be redirected to the service provider's log-on page.

Signal detection

If you can't detect a signal but you know there is supposed to be a wireless network in your vicinity, check to make sure the wireless radio is turned on. Double-click on the wireless network icon on the toolbar at the bottom of the screen. Now check the signal

strength and quality. Do this by checking the Wireless Network Status. Click on this icon and choose the "status" tab. Click the button marked "scan" to check for a wireless network manually. This box will also provide information on link quality and signal strength. This might require a little trial and error, and you may need to move your position closer to the access point to improve the signal strength.

Advanced Tips

Proxy settings
Your network connection may be configured to work through a corporate proxy server. If that's the case, the proxy settings must be disabled during the hotspot connection, then re-enabled for Web surfing after connecting to the corporate network via the VPN application. Finally, the proxy settings must be disabled for logging off the public hotspot, and then re-enabled when you are back at the office. You can do this by going to "Tools" in your browser and selecting "Internet Options," then "Connections," then "LAN Settings." Under "Proxy Server," choose "Automatically Detect Settings" and then be sure to deselect "Use automatic configuration script."

Preamble setting
In rare cases, you may need to adjust your preamble setting. From your wireless network connections icon, click on "Properties," then go to "Configure" at the top right. Select the "Advanced" tab, then select "Preamble Mode" under "Properties." Under "Value" on the right, select "Auto Tx Preamble." Some wireless cards do not do a good job of auto-detecting the preamble setting. If setting the preamble to "auto" doesn't work, try specifying a preamble length. If you do not know the preamble length being used at the site, first try "long", since this is most common, then "short" if that doesn't work.

If you are still having problems connecting, contact the vendor of your computer.